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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/921,660	08/03/2001	Klaus Heckel	22750/488	8200

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EXAMINER

SIMONE, CATHERINE A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1772

DATE MAILED: 11/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/921,660

Applicant(s)

HECKEL ET AL.

Examiner

Catherine Simone

Art Unit

1772

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 September 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,5,6,8,9 and 11-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,5,6,8,9 and 11-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Withdrawn Rejections

1. The 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11-21 over Shultz et al. in view of Heckel et al. of record in the Office Action mailed 6/9/04, Pages 2-5, Paragraph #4 has been withdrawn due to the Applicants amendment filed 9/13/04.

New Rejections

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. **Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11-21** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shultz et al. (US 5,670,237) in view of Heckel et al. (5,154,868) and in view of Welburn (GB 2 151 277).

Shultz et al. discloses a floor covering having a relief-type patterned surface (see col. 5, lines 62-66), wherein the surface is provided with irregularly distributed indentations, which have an elongated shape, which partially contact or intersect each other wherein at least one of the indentations is configured so as to run to a point (see Figure 5 shown below). However, Shultz et al. fails to disclose the floor covering comprising an elastomer material. Heckel et al. teaches that it is old and well-known in the analogous art to have a floor covering made of an elastomer material for the purpose of producing a floor covering having a relief-type patterned surface. Therefore, it would

have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to have modified the floor covering in Shultz et al. to comprise an elastomer material as suggested by Heckel et al. in order to produce a floor covering having a relief-type patterned surface.

Shultz et al. also fails to disclose the indentations being essentially straight. Welburn teaches that it is old and well-known in the art to have indentations that are essentially straight (see page 1, lines 49-52 and 85-91) for the purpose of producing a relief-type patterned surface for a floor covering. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to have modified the indentations in Shultz et al. to be essentially straight as suggested by Welburn in order to produce a relief-type patterned surface for a floor covering.

Furthermore, regarding claim 1, Shultz et al. fails to disclose the indentations having a depth of 0.02 mm to 0.2 mm, at a width of 0.2 mm to 2.5 mm and a length of 5 mm to 50 mm and regarding claim 2, Shultz et al. fails to disclose the indentations having a depth of 0.025 mm to 0.05 mm, at a width of 0.4 mm to 1.3 mm and a length of 6 mm to 40 mm. Shultz et al., however, teaches the indentations having a depth ranging from "very shallow (e.g., less than 0.010") to deep (e.g., 0.750")" (see col. 6, lines 11-15) and a varying width such as a narrow/small embossing width and a medium embossing width (see col. 7, line 12 and 18-20). Therefore, the optimum ranges for the depth, width and length of the indentations would be readily determined through routine experimentation by one having ordinary skill in the art depending on the desired end results as shown by Shultz et al. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to have modified the indentations in Shultz et al. to have a depth of 0.02 mm to 0.2 mm, at a width of 0.2 mm to 2.5 mm and a length of 5 mm to 50 mm, and a depth of 0.025 mm to 0.05 mm, at a width of 0.4 mm to 1.3 mm and a length of 6 mm to 40 mm, since it has

been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art in absence of showing unexpected results. *MPEP 2144.05 (II)*.

Moreover, it would have been obvious to modify the prior art as shown above in order to teach the presently claimed invention. Therefore, the end result would obviously minimize roll resistance.

Regarding **claims 5 and 6**, note each indentation intersects at least two other indentations (see Figure 5 shown below). Regarding **claims 8 and 9**, note the indentations have shapes that differ one from the other (see Figure 5 shown below). Regarding **claim 11**, note the surface percentage of the indentations is 5% to 50% of the total surface of the floor covering (see Figure 5 shown below). Regarding **claim 12**, note the surface percentage of the indentations is 20% to 40% of the total surface of the floor covering (see Figure 5 shown below). Regarding **claim 13**, note the indentations have the same depth over their entire length (see col. 6, lines 15-17). Regarding **claim 14**, note the remaining surface of the floor covering is essentially planar (see Figs. 3a-3d). Regarding **claim 15**, note the width of the individual indentations varies (see Fig. 3b). Regarding **claim 16**, note the length of the individual indentations varies (see Fig. 5 shown below). Regarding **claim 18**, note the floor covering is assembled from individual, repeating surface units (see col. 6, lines 26-30). Regarding **claim 19**, note the floor covering is made up of a single-layer material (see col.5, lines 55-61). Regarding **claims 20 and 21**, note the floor covering has a thickness in the range of 2 mm to 5 mm and in the range of 2.5 mm to 4 mm (see col. 11, lines 31-32).

Regarding **claim 17**, Shultz et al., also, fails to disclose the shape of the indentations wherein at least one of the lateral border edges of the indentations at least one location widens, to the outside, or narrows, to the inside. Normally, it is to be expected that a change in shape of the indentations

would be an unpatentable modification. Under some circumstances, however, changes such as shape may impart patentability to a product if the particular shape claimed produces a new and unexpected result which is different in kind and not merely in degree from the results of the prior art. MPEP 2144.04 IV (B).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to change the shape of the indentations in Schultz et al. wherein at least one of the lateral border edges of the indentations at at least one location widens, to the outside, or narrows, to the inside. One skilled in the art would have been motivated to do so in order to form a floor covering, since it has been held that the change in form or shape of the indentations would be an unpatentable modification in absence of showing unexpected results.

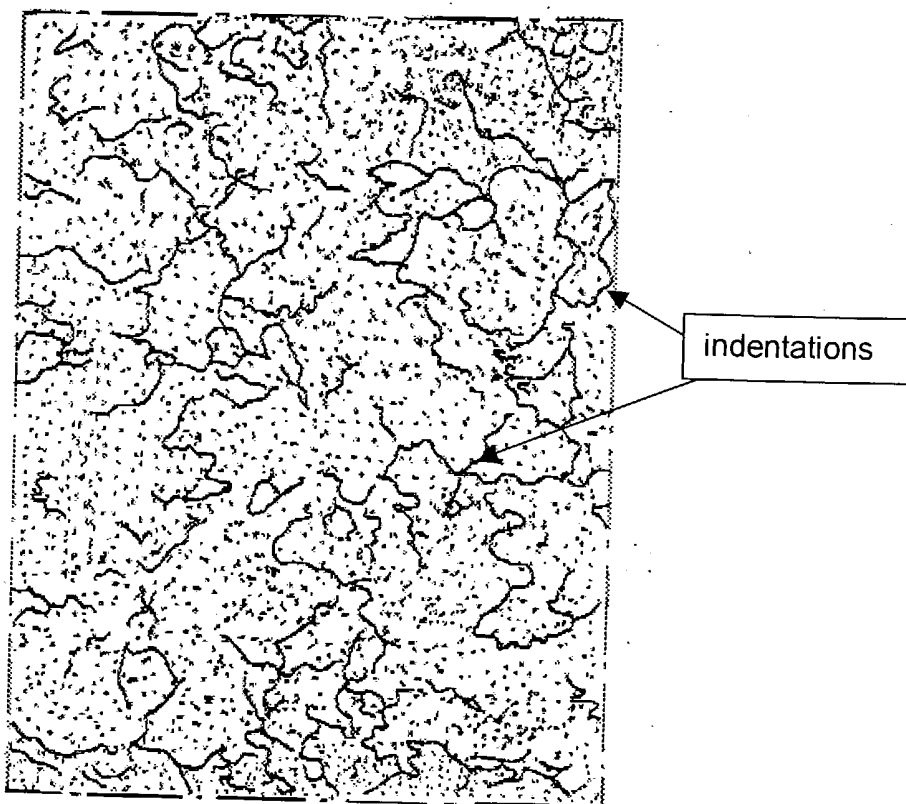


FIG. 5

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 11-21 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Art Unit: 1772

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Catherine Simone whose telephone number is (571)272-1501. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on (571) 272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

CAS

Catherine Simone
Examiner
Art Unit 1772
November 19, 2004


HAROLD PYON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
1772

11/28/04